

# THE BEREAN CHRISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIAL NEWS

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare, with the object of providing Ecclesial news, exhortations, articles and information of fraternal interest to the Brotherhood. Defending the original, foundation principles upon which the Truth was uncovered from darkness and upon which the Christadelphian movement was developed. Opposed to the dogmas of papal and protestant christendom. Upholding the Truth as The Berean Christadelphians since 1923.

Vol. XIV (XCVIV) No. 2

February, 2011

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God Willing, The Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the Brotherhood. Ecclesial news and correspondence, Fraternal Gathering notices, special activities and upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is

an effort to upbuild and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH  
**Ecclesial News**

**RICHARD, Sask., Canada**

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

The Richard ecclesia is pleased to share with you the great news that on Saturday Jan 8th, **Regan Rayner** gave an excellent confession of his faith in the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and on Sun. Jan 9th was baptized at the ecclesial hall and administered the right hand of fellowship at the memorial meeting following.

We are pleased to have him with us on the walk Zionward, and pray that we may all be a strength to one another during this time of probation.

For the Richard Ecclesia,

Bro. Sid Jones

**FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES**

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

**LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING**.....**June 10–12, 2011**

Bro. Ricky Hurst, PO Box 1381, Goldthwaite TX 1-325-451-4075

**RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING**.....**July 1 – July 4, 2011**

Sis. Christine Jones, RR# 1, Richard, Sask, S0M 2P0, Canada,

sc.jones@sasktel.net

**HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING**.....**July 25–31, 2011**

Bro. Mark Braune, 209 Ranger Dr., Buda, TX, 78610, 512-295-2868,

markbraune@gmail.com Study: "Zechariah"

**Holy Land Trip**

Our plans are continuing for another trip to the Holy Land in May, 2011, God willing. We expect more people than we had on our first trip and should have prices firmed up in a couple of months. Instead of going down into Egypt we hope to visit a few places that Paul travelled to: Athens, Corinth and Cenchrea before departing for home.

You may see the complete itinerary at the Richard web site (richardbereans.com). We look forward to the day when we will all assemble at Jerusalem to enjoy that marriage feast prepared for those that are accounted worthy. What a glorious hope we can look forward to. Please contact Bro. Jim Sommerville for further information.

**The BCAA**

The Berean Christadelphian Audio Archives, or BCAA for short, has made available a large selection of talks on MP3 online. The address is 38—Berean 2011

www.bcaudioarchives.blogspot.com. Please check this link as we will be updating with new material as much as possible.

The purpose of this site is to restore and make available lectures, exhortations, and study classes. Some of these talks are decades old and have seldom been heard.

We are always looking for tapes, and if you have some talks that you would like to share, please email either Bro. Craig Kiley (craigkiley@yahoo.com) or Bro. Noah Brown (sbsugar@gmail.com) and we will be happy to transfer the talks to mp3 format and post them.

## **The Image and the Stone - 3**

*“And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath”*—1 Sam. 17:23.

—and all the men bravely drawn up for battle draw back and cower before him. (We may find ourselves speaking of their fear a little disparagingly, but perhaps we should ask ourselves how *we* would have acted in the circumstances.)

But the boy David could not understand the action of the men of Israel—

*“Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”* (v. 26).

—that is, why doesn't someone go out and destroy him and remove the reproach from Israel? And the men he spoke to told him that Saul had offered his daughter and great riches and freedom for his father's house, to any who would face Goliath (v. 25)—yet with all these inducements no man had come forward.

The conqueror of Goliath should be given the king's daughter. Psalm 45 declares—

*“The king's daughter is all glorious within ...”*

—note particularly the *“within”* . . .

*“... her clothing is of wrought gold”* (v. 13).

*“Wrought gold”* is faith shapen under the hammer of affliction. Now, who is the *“king's daughter”*? This whole psalm, we find, is a beautiful song concerning Christ and his Bride. It contains the tribute to Christ that Paul quotes in Heb. 1:9—

*“Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”*

The conqueror of Goliath should also receive “*great riches.*” Paul’s use of this word in his various delineations of the glories of the Truth adds great depth to its meaning. He speaks of—

“*The riches of God’s goodness*” (Rom. 2:4);

“*The riches of His wisdom and knowledge*” (Rom. 11:33);

“*The riches of His grace*” (Eph. 1:7);

“*The riches of His inheritance*” (Eph. 1:18)

—and, above all

“*The unsearchable riches of Christ*” (Eph. 3:8).

\* \* \*

“*... and make his father’s house free in Israel.*”

That was the great purpose of Christ’s battle with the enemy of his brethren—to make his father’s house free in Israel.

“*Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin . . . If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed*” (John 8:34-36).

\* \* \*

“*And Eliab’s anger was kindled against David*” (v. 28).

Why? The most natural cause in the world—*fear and jealousy*. He, the eldest, a man of war, was afraid of Goliath. David, the youngest, a boy, was not. David’s fearless words reflected on him, the elder brother, and being a natural man he reacted with anger and blustering—calling David names and attempting to humiliate and belittle him. Eliab said—

“*With whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?*”

The “*few sheep in the wilderness*” have always been a matter of scorn and reproach to the faithful. So few can resist the argument of numbers that the fewness of the “*little flock*” has always been a stumbling-block.

We expect this from the world, but it is sad and discouraging to see this same outlook in the brotherhood—“We are the majority, and so that proves we must be right. You are just a ‘fragment,’ so you must be wrong.”

But the sheep have always been few—*and they have always been in the wilderness*—outcast and despised. And it has always been Christ’s humble work to care for his Father’s few sheep in the wilderness—the poor and downcast of the world, not the rich and well-favored.

But the time is coming for the humble shepherd to manifest himself as

the mighty deliverer. To the “few sheep” he says—

*“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom”* (Luke 12:32).

\* \* \*

The words of this shepherd boy come to the ears of the distraught king, and he is so desperate that he sends for him. And the poor shepherd boy says to the mighty king—

“Do not be afraid! *I* will destroy this Philistine.”

Saul reasons according to the thinking of the flesh—obsessed with Goliath's armor and might—

“Thou art not able to do it” (v. 33).

*Why not, if God is with him?* What difference do Goliath's size and natural advantages make? There again is that same fatal human obsession with sheer weight and bulk and the outward appearance of strength. David replies—

*“I kept my father's sheep, and there came out a lion and a bear . . . And I slew both . . . and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them . . . the Lord will deliver me”* (vs. 34-37).

*A lion and a bear.* What does that make us think of? What will Christ first encounter when he first comes to deliver his sheep?

Up to the present we have been reminded mostly of Christ's *first* advent to conquer the great enemy SIN, which held all men in fear and bondage of death. As we proceed, however, we shall find our minds directed more to the circumstances of his *second* coming (though not to the exclusion of the first).

*When* does Christ slay a lion and a bear? Just before he issues his challenge to the great image of the Kingdom of Men. In fact, like David, it forms the very background and stepping-stone of that challenge.

For first he subdues the Kings of the South and the North—Britain and Russia—the *Lion and the Bear*—the latterday Egypt and Assyria, as they squabble over his land—the pasture of his sheep. Then the challenge goes to the kingdoms of the world—

*“Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come”* (Rev. 14:7).

\* \* \*

*“As a roaring lion and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over poor people” (Prov. 28:15).*

The scripturally-trained eye sees that this is the character of all the sin-powers of the earth, of which the Kings of the North and the South are the latterday heads and representatives.

Picture Palestine—God’s Own pasture—the ravaged battle-ground between rival world-powers that Korea has been, and we can readily visualize the lion and the bear among the sheep.

\* \* \*

David’s faith was entirely in God—not in any way in himself. Therefore he had no doubts about the outcome, for *God cannot fail*. This is the frame of mind we must develop, if we are to be among the chosen few.

*God cannot fail*, and He has specifically promised “*both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” in those that truly love Him.

*“We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).*

*His workmanship*, and GOD CANNOT FAIL. Do we grasp the tremendous and revolutionary significance of this passage? **Whether or not we do is the key to life or death.**

*“Filled with all the fullness of God . . . according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph. 3:19-20).*

This is what we must sell all to obtain. This is what we must seek agonizingly and unceasingly, as for hid treasures, until we find it—for **this is life, all else is death.**

*“ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US.”*

\* \* \*

*“And Saul armed David with his armor, and put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail” (v. 38).*

Saul attempts to arm David as Goliath is armed. That is simply fighting flesh with flesh. A “helmet of brass” (flesh) is the direct opposite of the golden helmet of salvation on which David relied.

The children of the Spirit are no match for the children of the flesh if they attempt to meet them on their own ground with their own weapons. Here the children of the flesh have all the advantage of numbers, experience, prestige and learning. Here is where the churches of the world—afraid of appearing unlearned, afraid of being left behind, afraid of being called

“obscurantists”—have given away their scriptural foundation and undermined their only bulwark by meeting the evolutionists halfway in their speculations.

The children of the Spirit must find higher ground for the conflict. *They must NOT be drawn down into the Philistine plain*, but must stay up in the Israel hills. Their defense must lie in holiness and faith, and the consequent indwelling, invincible power and presence of the living God—

*“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord . . . he that hath clean hands and a pure heart”* (Psa. 24:3-4).

*If we can reach this point, we are unconquerable.* If the children of God haven't these things, they are no match for the wisdom of the world. It is only as instruments of God's use that they succeed against all the advantages that are on the world's side.

So David wisely put off all Saul's brazen armor. He did not even retain the helmet as protection for his head—the most vital part, but went forth in his simple shepherd's garb, with no natural protection at all. He realized it was all or nothing. *Part* of the armor would have been worse than none—it would have impeded his movements and chances for success without giving him any guarantee of adequate protection.

This is a problem and decision we must all face. There is no use putting on *half* the world's armor. If we want to rely on the world's way of protection, let us go all the way. But if we want to rely on God, let us go all the way in *that* direction. Sad indeed is the man who grasps at both and gains neither!

\* \* \*

*“And he took his staff in his hand”* (v. 40).

—his shepherd's staff. We cannot help wondering why David carried his staff into this encounter. What could he possibly have thought of doing with it against this great, heavily-armed giant? *Naturally* speaking, this is one of the most difficult things to understand, but as to the *spiritual* significance we are guided by the 23rd Psalm. Truly David was here walking into the “*valley of the shadow of death,*” and he declares—

*“I will fear no evil: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.”*

The staff is clearly the sustaining and comforting presence of God. And surely he needed comfort! We remember that David wrote this Psalm, and that it expresses his thoughts and feelings (while, of course, being a foreshadowing of the mind of Christ).

Therefore the taking of the staff—apparently from a natural point of view so unreasonable—seems to give us a marvelous insight into his frame of mind as he went down to meet the mighty Philistine champion in this valley of the shadow of death, as the army of men and the people of God watched in tense silence.

(To be continued, God willing next month.)

—*Bro. G.V. Growcott*

## **Faith In Daniel**

When the subject of Daniel 3 comes up, there are many important lessons, types and symbolic language to consider, but generally our first thought is the great faith that these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, had as they faced the fiery furnace. Their faith was so great that they would rather die a torturous death than bow down to anyone or thing other than Yahweh.

Throughout the ages, believers have been faced with similar situations. In many cases, men and women have died horrible deaths as a result of their strong faith in God, others of course have lacked the faith to withstand such situations and turned away from God rather than face such pain. None of us today have faced anything like that, not to say it couldn't happen one day in the future before the return of Christ, but for now, we enjoy fairly easy lives in comparison. Our faith is tested in other, somewhat easier ways, and yet, there are still those who have fallen from the truth. Why do they fall? Because they lacked in faith.

Men today have faith in many things, not always God. Our faith is what gives us hope. To quote Hebrews 11 *“faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*

Some men have faith in their man made machines like cars, airplanes, tractors, tanks, missiles, satellites, computers, navigation systems, the list goes on. Of course technically, these are things that can be seen, as opposed to the true faith as described in Hebrews, but yet they are the things so many men believe in more than anything else, unfortunately more than God, if they believe in God at all.

There are other types of faith in the world, things that do meet the definition of Hebrews 11, things that can't be seen like science, and philosophy. Men from their earliest days through to today have sought answers to their existence other than what is taught in scripture. The nature of the flesh is to rebel from God, and so men come up with ideas like evolution, or if they chose to believe in a god or many gods, they will make up their own, rather than serve their Creator.

As believers, we can also have faith in things of the world, but we cannot allow that to happen. Faith is the substance of things hoped for.

Is our hope to be a part of the Kingdom of God and serve Him forever? Or is it to one day drive a car that runs on water or see a particular political party have majority rule in the government of this country, or maybe see the age of 100. These are the hopes and dreams of the world around us, but not ours. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had tunnel vision when it came to their faith. They would rather die than have anything to do with the faith men had in their king or his statues and idols. This is where our faith is to be, if all of our hope is in the Kingdom of God, then that is all we need for our “evidence of the thing not seen”. Our faith has to be strong enough to truly believe it whether we see it with our eyes or not. The difficult part is that the things we are to remove ourselves from in this world, we can see. We can see all the temptations around us. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego saw all of the men and women around them worshiping the king, while they remained separate, that took both faith, and a lot of guts as well. They knew what would happen if they chose God over the King, and they still chose God.

When we consider faith, we can't help but consider Abraham -Rom. 4:16-25

*<sup>16</sup>Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,*

*<sup>17</sup>(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. <sup>18</sup>Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. <sup>19</sup>And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: <sup>20</sup>He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; <sup>21</sup>And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. <sup>22</sup>And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.*

*<sup>23</sup>Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; <sup>24</sup>But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; <sup>25</sup>Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

Abraham, had many tests of his faith. Sometimes things appeared hopeless, but yet he still believed in God and the hope of the promises. For

example, leaving his life in Ur and moving, accepting that he would be a father of many nations even when he thought his body was “dead”, as far as any ability to have children, and of course the fact that he was prepared to kill his only son, Isaac. He was able to do these things because of his faith. As vs 18 says *“who against hope, believed in hope”*, this is what faith is, a belief in hope. The verse goes on to say *“that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.”*

This is referring to the sands of the seashore and the stars in the sky. Abraham was actually given something he could see that would further strengthen his faith. Of course, we have those same things to see in our day as well. We can look at the sand at the beach or the stars in the sky at night and remember these were the same things Abraham looked at as a reminder to him of the great nation of believers in God that would come from his seed. We can take comfort in that as well as other scriptural examples given to us all to strengthen our faith.

What better example is there than the nation of Israel itself. It has managed to survive 1000s of years and still be a nation today. We know that God has had a hand in its survival, and although they have gone through punishments, we know that God has a plan for Israel and for spiritual Israelites like ourselves.

Vs 21 says Abraham was “fully persuaded”, that is easy to say, but are we all “fully persuaded”? Obviously many men throughout the ages thought they were, and as it turns out, were not. They faltered whether through the pleasures of the world or persecution. I think we would all agree that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were fully persuaded. They had no doubt in their minds that Yahweh was the one and true God, and to bow down to anyone or anything else would be against His will. So, how do we become “fully persuaded” and have the faith of men like Abraham, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

Firstly, we can’t expect it to be easy. We are to be tested and pass the tests. The lesson can be seen in gold, which we know to represent tried faith. It goes through fire to remove the impurities and become refined. We are to go through the fire as well.

I Pet. 1:6 *“<sup>6</sup>Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: <sup>7</sup>That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:”*

Ultimately we want to be “found unto praise and honour and glory” before Christ, and so, as Peter says, we must be tried with fire. Fire in this case represents trials and tests of our faith. We will all be tested in one way or another. As we have said those tests can be persecution or it can be tests that require fighting with the desires of the flesh.

Quoting from Bro. Roberts on the subject he said, *“The trouble has to be severe sometimes before we are able to realize our true place in creation as mere products of divine power. Some could not be made to realize this by any amount of trouble, and so they are let alone, but neither could the best endowed know it otherwise. It is truly said that we are creatures of circumstances; those who know nothing but pleasure, can never know their own insignificance and the fleeting nature of present life, God’s terrible greatness, and the reality of His claims and His purpose with man.”*

The men who seek out God can be expected to be loved as a father would love his son, which also includes chastening.

Proverbs 3:11,12 *“despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: <sup>12</sup>For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.”*

Hebrews 12:11 *“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”*

So, we should be proud to go through trials, and remember that they are only helping us and leading us towards righteousness. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego went through the fire both literally and symbolically. They were tested, and passed the test, but were also, as we know, literally put through the fire. After going through both fires, they were better for it, and became purified as gold is purified. They will certainly be able to stand before Christ and be given “praise, honour and glory”, to quote from the verse in I Peter.

It’s interesting that it was a golden statue that was the center of their test. It was no coincidence that it was made of gold. Of course there are a few different directions we could go into regarding this golden statue, but for the case of our current subject, we know that Nebuchadnezzar wanted the statue to represent himself, he thought a completely golden statue would mean his Kingdom would never die. But, it was all a lie, including the type of tried faith, this statue did not mean he was a man who was completely faithful to God, anymore than it meant his Kingdom would never end. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego could not bow before any image, but certainly not one that was the attempt by a man to make himself and his Kingdom

something it was not. Nebuchadnezzar thought a statue would be the easy way out, but we know that there is no easy way. We are supposed to go through trials in life, if we do not, how can we remove the impurities and become a stronger person?

We will not pass all of the trials either.

Acts 14:22 *“that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”*

And as sinful creatures we will unfortunately fail some of those trials and tribulations, but with strong faith, we can pass more than we fail.

Rom 7:19-25 *“For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. <sup>21</sup>I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. <sup>22</sup>For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: <sup>23</sup>But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup>O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? <sup>25</sup>I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”*

Paul faced trials just as we do, unfortunately he was not always able to do what he wanted to do, and the flesh took control. We all sin, and fail, but we can ask for forgiveness as a part of our walk toward the kingdom of God. We all have that hope as a result of Christ. As we have said, that is where our faith comes in. It is through our faith that we are able to be forgiven. It is our faith that keeps us going through trials, we have a hope of something more important than anything in this world.

As Eph. 1:18 says *“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints”*

We have been enlightened to the truth and the more we study it, and consider it, and meditate on it, the more our minds are elevated and our faith increases. Imagine how much faith the believers through the ages who have died or been willing to die have had. This is the level that we are to achieve.

Hebrews 11 covers many believers who through their faith were able to serve Yahweh as He expected them to, and will be rewarded for it. It starts of course with Abel, who was one who died as a result of his faith. As it says *“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain”*, it cost him his life, but he had the faith that we are to strive for. He

understood that God would reward him for his faith. Cain on the other hand had no faith and was punished.

As vs 6 says *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”*

We will not be rewarded in the age to come if we do not have the faith required, because it is **impossible** to please God without it. We can attend meeting on Sunday, and say our prayers for the meals, maybe do the readings, maybe attend Bible class, but all of it is a hoax, only satisfying man, if we don't have the faith required of us. God sees where our heart is, and if it is not in the right place, then it is impossible to please Him, no matter what our “works” may be.

With regard to faith and works, that is an interesting subject.

We can read one case in Scripture where the point is made that faith is more important than works, but in another we see where faith without works is dead! How do we reconcile it?

Firstly, we have to decide what works are. I think we would agree that faith is mental while works are physical in some way.

And, while works are physical, I think we could also say works could be not doing something just as much as doing something is a work. For example, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego choose not to worship the image. They had to physically not bow to it. In other words, they stood, and in standing they were serving God, but breaking the Law under Nebuchadnezzar.

So, they had both faith and works in that case.

Lets consider the words of James. 2:14-26

*<sup>14</sup>What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup>And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? <sup>17</sup>Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. <sup>18</sup>Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup>Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. <sup>20</sup>But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? <sup>21</sup>Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? <sup>22</sup>Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? <sup>23</sup>And*

*the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.<sup>24</sup> Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.<sup>25</sup> Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? <sup>26</sup>For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

Here James gives the examples of Abraham and Rahab as those who were justified by works, but those works came out of their faith. He makes the case for works, but really is pointing out the importance of both.

An example of the argument for faith is in the words of Paul, in Rom. 3:27, 28. Paul's argument is towards the Jews in Rome who elevated the works of the law over faith as a means to justification. The point is well made that firstly the law cannot save, but more importantly, they gave no room for faith, and that was wrong.

I think we can see the importance for both works and faith, and one brings about the other. Works, whatever they may be, whether simple study and meditation on the Word, or doing something for the sake of the ecclesia and or God, can elevate our faith, and the stronger our faith, the more we should be showing that faith in our works. If the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego weren't that strong, they could not have performed the work of standing while all others bowed to the image. As we have said before, we may not have to deal with something as life threatening like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had to deal with, but we all have tests that give us the opportunity to do great works before God.

How many of us have had to stand in front of a large group of non believers and stand out as the different one? We all have to do things like not accepting jury duty, or not voting, being a conscientious objector from the military. These things are not life threatening but they are true works that show our faith before God.

To go back to Scripture for another example of this same type of situation, what about Mordecai from the book of Esther?

Let's consider that account for a minute. Esther 3:1-6

*<sup>1</sup>After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. <sup>2</sup>And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence. <sup>3</sup>Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressesest thou the king's commandment? <sup>4</sup>Now it came to pass, when 50—Berean 2011*

*they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew. <sup>5</sup>And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. <sup>6</sup>And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.*

So, King Ahasuerus promotes Haman to being above all the princes, and all the kings servants must bow to him. We find in verse 2 of this chapter that this is a problem for Mordecai, for a couple of reasons:

1. He was not going to bow to the flesh, only God. In our day of course, most people are not required in most cases to bow to a man, with the exception of certain religions who bow to their leaders, but we as true believers bow to no man, and Mordecai believed this way as well.

2. Haman was an Agagite, who came from the Amalekites who were God's enemy, Mordecai probably knew of Haman's descendents, and certainly would not bow to him for that reason as well.

So, hopefully none of us would bow to Haman if we were in Mordecai's shoes, we can certainly see why he, as a follower of Yahweh, would not.

We should keep in mind the words of Psalm 10:2 *"The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined."* This is particularly good, because we know in the case of Haman, he was killed in the very device that he made to kill Mordecai. Of course we shouldn't consider this verse as about vengeance, maybe Yahweh's, but not ours. As believers we are to love our enemies. We can leave the vengeance up to God. In some cases, like Paul for example, a wicked persecutor may one day accept the truth. But like Mordecai, we are to serve God and follow His commandments despite any persecution that may affect us.

Mordecai is another example of a man of great faith in God, it was strong enough that he was willing to die for it. The question for us is, is our faith as strong as Mordecai, or Abraham, or Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? And how do we gain faith like that? Firstly, there is only one place that has the answer, it's in our Bibles.

Let's look at a few places in Scripture that teach about faith, and perhaps a trend will be noticed that can help us in finding how to strengthen our faith.

To start with, we can look at I Cor. 13, a chapter known by many as the chapter on “love”.

Let’s look at vs 1-3. *<sup>1</sup>Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. <sup>2</sup>And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

The word charity is better translated love. It’s *agape* love, or the higher love than *philio* love. It’s a love that has a much more spiritual meaning and is the love God has for us and we have for Him. If we *agape* our brother we consider their spiritual welfare as well as their physical welfare.

In this first part of the chapter we see that Paul points out to the brethren in Corinth that they could have enough faith to move mountains, but if they don’t have love it means nothing.

In the first verse Paul says a lack of love is as “*sounding brass or a tinkling symbol*”.

To really understand what he is saying we have to think about what that is. They are musical instruments, however, the sound of them alone is by no means music. Imagine if rather than singing our hymns to the piano we used two symbols instead! It would sound awful. This is what an ecclesia without love sounds like to God. Sure, its making noise, but the noise is useless, and to go along with Paul’s point about faith, the ecclesia could be completely faithful to God, but lacking love would make that faith useless.

Vs. 2 mentions not just faith, but knowledge and understanding and the gift of prophecy all being useless if there is no love. Paul wanted the brethren in Corinth to use the knowledge and understanding that some of them had and make sure others understood it as well. To keep our understanding of the truth to ourselves is selfish and shows that we are not applying what we know, because a true student of the truth would understand the importance of teaching it to others.

We might also add that this is somewhat of an exaggeration by Paul here. Obviously none of us have faith that could move mountains. For one thing it would be God that would move the mountain, and not us or our faith, but having the faith that we are expected to have should also give us the understanding that love must also be a part of it. Love and faith have to go hand in hand. Our faith brings out love and the more we show our love the more our faith is strengthened. Sometimes doing something for our brother

or sister out of love for them can help both them and ourselves. It can strengthen the bond between us, and the more that is done within the ecclesia, the more the ecclesia is strengthened. Using the symbolism of Paul... if one person can have enough faith to move a mountain, what can the faith of an entire ecclesia do?

Let's look at the end of the chapter. Vs. 13 *"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."*

These are 3 very important parts to the character of a true believer. One cannot be removed without affecting the other two.

Faith here is from the Greek *"pistis"* which means "belief or understanding"; it is something that is developed over time through an understanding of things that have occurred.

We have to have something to believe in, some sort of substance, and once we have that we can have faith in it. To quote from Heb 11:1 again, *"faith is the substance of things hoped for"*

Faith can also be measured, however, only God can measure it, not man, no matter how much we think we may know a person, we can't measure their faith. Those in Heb. 11 had the proper amount of faith to be seen as righteous in God's eyes, which is what matters most. After all, we know that many of them were not seen that way by the men of their time.

Hope- Hope is developed through faith, again, *"faith is the substance of things hoped for."*

It is the vision of the future that we all have faith in. Quoting from Col. 1:23 *"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the **hope** of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven;"*

We can find what our hope is, in the gospel. Christ's teachings gave believers hope for salvation. It is very difficult to have faith in something that doesn't give us hope. And why hope for something that we don't have faith in? We can all certainly have faith in the one hope of the gospel. But on the other hand, we may hope for rain, but it is difficult to have faith in that hope. I'm sure we all hope that the weather gets cooler, but none of us really have much faith that that is going to happen! Not any time soon anyway. However, what if we were told in Scripture that something is going to happen. That is where our hope and faith lie, so certainly we would feel much more comfortable in believing in it. That is why we all believe so strongly in study of the Word of God, it is where our faith comes from, and

the more we study it and keep it in the forefront of our minds, the stronger our faith and hope can be.

Charity- is the greatest, because it is a combination of faith and hope. It is an action, it allows us to be a doer of both faith and hope. We can apply them in our actions. In Col. 3:14, Paul describes it as a bond of perfectness, that we are to “put on”. It is not a natural characteristic of the flesh, that is why we have to “put it on”. The faith and hope that we have really doesn’t mean anything if we don’t apply it in our lives and in our actions. Love shows God and our brethren that we truly believe and want to follow His commandments, which includes serving our brothers and sisters, and making sure they maintain that faith, hope and charity.

Romans 1:16, 17

*<sup>16</sup>For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup>For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

What does it mean to say “the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith”? Well, this is actually somewhat of a poor translation. It would actually be better translated, “*for therein is the righteousness of God revealed out of faith, towards faith*”

We take two important things from this.

1. We are able to recognize the righteousness of God through having a strong faith, which is gained through the Word of God.
2. We have a long journey in our lives of attaining that strong faith. The more we live our lives as faithful believers in God, the stronger our faith, and having that strength in faith is something we can look towards in the future.

This is backed up again by Paul in this epistle in Rom. 10:17 “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” This is part of that “substance of things hoped for” that gives us our faith. It all comes from the Word of God. I’m sure all of us know that feeling we get after studying Scripture, or for example after attending a gathering like this one. We feel like our minds are elevated. It is that feeling that strengthens our faith. Unfortunately we also know the feeling we have after going back to work or school or any other dealing with the world, and our minds are no longer on God, but instead something else. That is how our faith is weakened.

So, I think we can all see the importance of where we focus our thoughts.

To finish our verse in 1:17, it ends with a quote from Habak. 2:4- “the just shall live by faith”- Habakkuk had complained to God about the wickedness of Israel, and Yahweh responded by saying Israel would be punished. So, Habakkuk asks Yahweh to reconsider on the basis of His righteousness, and Yahweh’s response was “the just shall live by faith”. In other words those who were in fact just, would be saved because of their faith. Paul was obviously fond of this quote because he uses this same quote in Gal. 3:11, and Heb. 10:38

Like Paul, I’m personally fond of this quote as well. There is actually a lot that can be taken from it. Mainly because the 3 important words can stand out depending on how you read it.

The JUST shall live by faith.

The just shall LIVE by faith.

The just shall live by FAITH.

The faith aspect is of course the important one concerning our subject matter. Based on the quote, it shows how the “just” are to live... by faith. That statement, however, can be understood in more than one way, depending on how you define “live”. On the one hand, it could refer to how we as the just, or at least those who hope to be considered “just” in God’s eyes, live our lives. Our thoughts and actions throughout this probationary period should be determined by our faith. Our faith can guide us to do right or wrong, and it can also give us strength when we are down, and hope when we need it.

But, that is only one way of seeing the word “live”, another way of looking at it is the same way it should be seen in John 11:25,26 *“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”*

To truly “believe in Christ” is to have the faith that we are talking about this morning. And, as Christ says, those who do “believe” in him “shall live”. That “live” is not the three score and ten we get in this age, it is eternal life. The life we all are striving for. So to say “the just shall live by faith” is saying what Christ said in John 11, the just will have eternal life because of their faith. *“and whosoever liveth and believeth in (him) shall never die”*

So let’s go back now to our account in Daniel 3.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego we would all agree had faith, the faith we have been discussing this morning; one that came about through an

understanding of the Word of God, that was nothing without love, that brought about hope, the one hope that we all have, that would lead to their (and our) salvation, and with that eternal life. They had this faith, and it guided them to do the right thing no matter what, whether it meant their lives or not.

If we can have that same faith, it will lead us on that path towards the Kingdom. That path has many diversions, so we all need faith as strong as that to keep us away from the turn offs that lead to a different path, one that gives us no hope at all. Obviously something with no hope doesn't require faith to follow it. As we have continued to say this morning, "faith is the substance of things hoped for". Of course there is one thing that we can have faith in if we follow that path... it will most definitely lead to death. Unless someone can find hope in that, we can all see that there is only one path to follow.

Prov. 4:14-18

*<sup>14</sup>Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. <sup>15</sup>Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. <sup>16</sup>For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. <sup>17</sup>For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. <sup>18</sup>But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

—Bro. Scott Ricks

## **Being Content**

*"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."* Philippians 4:11

With time brings wisdom if we are fortunate. When I was younger I always thought that I needed a better house, a more prestigious position at work with a larger salary, a nicer car, these are things I just had to have and then I could be happy. As we get older we realize that these things make life a bit more comfortable but after acquiring them they lose their thrill and then we are searching for something else. Why is it that when we don't have something and then we finally acquire it, off we are to the next object that we must have?

Why can't I just stop and be thankful for what I have right now? Do I thank the Lord enough for all the blessings that he has bestowed on me? Unfortunately not, I fall far short. How much time spent thanking Him is enough, once a day, twice a day? it is said all the day long; I certainly have some improving to do. Once we have experienced both good and bad, rich

and poor, do we then realize that we should be happy now, because things can always be worse?

We really don't need the biggest house in town, just a place to call home. A bed in the evening would suffice all else is a luxury is it not? I think of some of the families I have met in my travels. The people in the Philippines lived in small bamboo huts three feet off the ground and they were so happy to have that! There was no electricity, no plumbing, no modern comforts to speak of and the children rode on a water buffalo in and out of the fields to get around. I can remember everyone was so content and happy. This is one of those moments in my life that made an unforgettable experience for me personally. It makes me think of all the things that I thought I had to have to make my life complete. I had a nice place to stay, enough money to live comfortably, but I kept searching for the next object, I just had to have. What did those people in the bamboo hut understand that I didn't.

Now I know better, the Lord has blessed me in so many ways I have no reason to be unhappy. I ran after all those objects and false luxuries, so that after I had acquired them, there was still a feeling of lacking that I was not yet satisfied. "Trappings" the things we are told we must have to be a success or be happy, but after it is all said and done there is still an emptiness that has not been satisfied. An emptiness that can only be filled with the help of the Lord, and by asking him for guidance each day. Let's thank the Lord today and every day for the blessings he has allowed us to have and given abundantly to us that we may help one another.

Going without and not being influenced by worldly trends or must have styles, is to be content with what we have right here and now and enjoying the laughter around the table with friends that is so much better than if I am seen wearing the latest fashion or maybe the newest trend in jewelry, electronics, or popular gadgets. Paul in Acts 20: 33 - 35 says,

*"I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."* Paul dedicated his whole life to the Truth. He was anxious for nothing, knowing the Lord was with him.

I am so thankful to have been led to the Truth and that I still have time in my life to make a change for the better. And it makes me understand how the Truth eliminates problems from making their way into our life. By just doing what is right will help eliminate problems before they occur. I must

try every day to realize how lucky I am and be content with what I have now. It is not what I could or might have tomorrow, thinking in some way it will make it so much better. It's realizing now what I have, I just need to see it and appreciate that.

We read in I Tim.6:8, “*and having food and raiment let us be therewith content*”.

The Lord knows what we need long before we do. I need not complain anymore about the food that I have had in the past or present I might add I will not say, “not chicken again” or “the same old tuna fish salad in my lunch”. After a visit to a third world country where a family's meal is gathered at the local neighborhood landfill and found wherever it can be acquired, or how about the local villagers gathering to bid the highest amount of money they can afford at a local food auction for what's left of the only 2 day old fish to be found for miles around, just to try to put food on the table for their families. I can only feel quite humbled and selfish when I think of how I have complained in the past for such fine meals I have had the luxury to receive by the Lord's blessing.

Raiment, clothing or covering, this includes shelter as well. Let us be happy to have our clothing that the Lord allowed us to have. It may be a fine linen suit or it may be cotton blue jeans, but be content with what you have and what the Lord has blessed you with. Whether you wear a \$500.00 suit from Italy or a pair of pants from the Salvation Army store for \$2.50 cents (By the way I have worn both), your worship and praise to the Lord does not change because of what you wear or how you are seen. “The Lord knows the heart”.

So be appreciative of what you have and what the Lord has allowed you to have. Once you have seen how so many other people in the world live, and what they must do every day to survive, you certainly will see just how lucky most of us are to enjoy what we have right here, right now and be content with that. As Paul tells us in Philippians 4:11 “*not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in what so ever state I am, therewith be content*”. I really like this verse because after reading this it seemed to be so straight forward but after some contemplation it does help me live a more peaceful life if, I can keep this in full view at all times as I walk in this life. Much of my problems sometimes are self-made, because, I must have some new gadget or earn more money or whatever it may be. Be content with what you have, not with what your neighbor has, not your boss and not your friends...with what you have. Let us learn from what Paul was telling us. Be content with less or more. Abundance poses the same problem, let's not go overboard, too much has its problems as well.

In I Timothy 6: 6 & 7 *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.”* Riches can lead to discontent and craving for more if not used in the right way. Our treasure is not on earth - we have a treasure that *“neither moth nor rust doth corrupt.”*

If we continue in I Timothy 6: 9-11, *“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”* The possession of riches is not wrong it is the trust in riches that is harmful. Let's find our midway point and enjoy helping each other with what the Lord has blessed us.

It is difficult to enjoy what we have and being content in this day and age when we have everything available to us. Everything has its price so we must make more money or use the resources we have to pay for the things people say we must have to be in fashion. But being content or going without has never gone out of fashion it sometimes just gets overlooked with all the possibilities that are open to us. When I go without it is not really so bad as people may think, it's more about how you choose to spend your time and money on what you feel is important. When you are content with your present surroundings the pressures of life that seem to affect us all are eased a bit and you can concentrate on the important things like helping others and enjoying it. When you are all tied up in knots with stress about how you will get this or that or I must get to work as fast as I can so I can make more money to buy more stuff. There are people that work 50 or 60 hours a week and Saturdays to help pay for things that they have bought or want to buy. This leads to working all the time and leaving no time for the Truth. Then your life becomes a chore or a grind and you have no time to study, you overlook helping people all because you are in a hurry to get to work or your mind is preoccupied with worry and stress therefore you miss out on an opportunity to help others as the Lord desires us to help one another.

I have noticed as people get older they realize that their days are numbered and that they are mortal. You will notice how the older and wiser I might add, don't sweat the small stuff. They try to laugh and enjoy the simple things in life. They don't make a big deal about who will be in charge at this meeting or that get together or who should manage everybody's time at some social event, or what will they say about what I am wearing today.

They are content with who they are, and content with what they are wearing or content to maybe work in their garden and enjoy the day or maybe sew a quilt and enjoy a friend's company, or meet friends in town for coffee and conversation, enjoying their days hopefully as the Lord intended, and hopefully helping somebody in the process. David said in Psalm 37: 23-25, *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."*

Not being content—are we all guilty of this at one point or another in our lives. Can I live another day without a new car? Will I be able to go on with my life if I don't have more money in my savings account? Or maybe the earth will stand still if I don't buy the latest and fastest P.C. on the market right now. It's easy to see how our environment has an hidden effect on us, television, our close friends, our work associates all influence us and the way we view what is important in our lives whether we realize it or not. It is not a sudden change but a subtle and unnoticeable change or influence. Then as we look back in 6 months or a year we ask ourselves, how come I didn't notice it or see it?

Being content is a daily task that is developed as any good trait or habit, with our world bombarding us with commercials on TV, radio in the car, telemarketers on our home phones, it is up to us to determine what is best for us and more importantly what is important as the Truth is concerned. I have started asking myself, is this need I have good for just me or can it be used to help others as well? Simplifying our lives is easier said than done, but would definitely help as far as being content with fewer things to clutter and bog you down therefore less to complicate the process of being content and easier to make an effort to be content with what you have. But being content and making decisions as to what is important to us is as personal and individual as we are. It is easy to say look at the things they have! Or who in their right mind would have that! But since we should not judge others, as easy as it is to do, let's just thank the Lord for all our blessings great and small that he has given us right now and be content. Hopefully we will enjoy our lives more fully, helping others along the way. Hebrews 13:5, *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*

The challenge in being content begins when things are not as you would like. Contentment does not mean everything is perfect, but that you are doing the best you can and with the Lord's help and guidance you will

continue to stand fast and remain strong in your convictions, that where you are is where you belong. While making a conscious effort to be content, a great sense of calm engulfs you and the drive to keep going and going, to keep running and hurrying has a lessening effect and a relaxing calm settles about you. The stresses of everyday life and obligations seem to be brought more in focus. The prioritization of life begins and you can step back and take stock of where you are, where you are going, and that you are O.K. with that. But always thank the Lord for the day and for His guidance.

Not to be mistaken, to work hard for a good cause is one thing, but to work your life away just for the sense of more money or material things is not what the Lord is telling us to do. I'm sure helping others less fortunate with the different gifts we all possess in our different capacities would be much more pleasing to the Lord than all the money overtime could possible place in our savings account. We all know that we should provide for our loved ones, to work an honest day for an honest day's wages, let's just keep the Lord in sight and thank Him for the present moment that He has allowed us to have.

As we go on with our lives in the next few days and weeks, I am sure you yourself will see how the worldly things and modern conveniences can creep up into our lives and affect our thought and decision making skills to what seems important in our lives. What is important is putting others first and helping people; it may be a simple little thing at first but starting a new habit is always a little clumsy at first but after a few times it certainly will get easier and you find yourself more comfortable with it. We hope to make it a permanent trait that will stay in our lives and show others by example as to the hidden joys the Lord has given us to experience, if we would just slow down and put into practice what he has been telling us in Scripture for many years.

I pray that if I may help as many people as I can, that others will see that by this example I set forth that the Lord will continue to guide me in a pleasing manner. While being content and appreciative in what I have and not always wanting for something, this is a contribution to the Truth. Hopefully it will lead others to its attractiveness, which will in turn enable others to seek the glory of the Truth. We all find it difficult on certain days to walk and act as the Lord would want us to, but as we try with our own capabilities and ask the Lord to strengthen us in our walk to be stronger in His ways. We pray He will give us what we need to continue to bring the light to others and that they too will see the light and hope the Truth has to offer all.

—*Bro. Jim Snow*

## **The Scriptures**

“God's teaching finds access to a man's mind by the study of the scriptures, which are sufficient for instruction in righteousness, and the development of a man of God - 2 Tim. 3:6. A man thus taught believes 'the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ' Act. 8:12; and in acquiring this faith, finds himself possessed of an enlightened mind, a love for the truth he believes, and a disposition such as Abraham possessed; in other words, he is a subject of a 'faith that works by love' and purifies the heart”. Eureka Vol. 111, p.358 —*Bro. John Thomas*

## Encouraging Words No. 17

IF Jesus was miraculously begotten, why did he so often style himself “the Son of man?” To this query, on the part of our Josephite friends, we would reply, because, as the Scriptures show, he was really and truly a man, and not such in appearance only. He was “God’s own Son” sent “in the likeness of sinful flesh;” he was “in all things” made like unto his brethren (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:17). The divine promises and principles in connection with salvation demanded that he should be such. The covenanted seed was to be of Davidic—and therefore Abrahamic—blood. Christ was not merely a constituted or adopted son of David. His mother was Davidic. This is made evident by both the announcing Angel and Paul. The former, addressing the as yet unmarried Mary, expressly excludes a human father for the child to be born, and yet speaks of David as his father. It follows that Mary must necessarily have been Davidic. Paul clinches the matter by saying that “God sent forth his son made of a woman,” and that he (God’s Son) “was made of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Gal. 4:4; Rom. 1:3). In view of Christ being in this way the actual seed of his two great progenitors, Abraham and David, it is understandable that he should claim to be not only the divinely-begotten Son of God, but really and truly the Son of man, and not such in name and appearance only.

When we further consider the principles involved in his bearing our nature as a representative sacrifice (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14), and as a compassionate high priest who could be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb. 2:17, 18), we can see why this divinely begotten Son of God should emphasise and keep to the front the no less important truth that he was “the Son of man.”

Our friends ask why Joseph should be spoken of as the “father” and “parent” of Christ (Luke 11:41, 48), if he were not actually his father. The answer is not far to seek. Joseph, by his marriage with Mary, ere the child

was born, became a legally constituted parent to the son of his Davidic wife. Joseph was a just and enlightened man, and that he heartily and willingly accepted the position of parent may be gathered from his ready compliance when bidden by God to wed Mary. If Mary was favoured in being chosen to be Messiah's mother, Joseph was scarcely less so in having such a son divinely raised up to him. That he was not the actual father of Christ could have been no grievance to Joseph, as our friends insist it would have been. Than Joseph none would better know the impotence of the naturally-begotten sons of David to effect salvation. Where were the most righteous of his ancestors—Josiah, Hezekiah, David, Abraham? Corrupting in the tomb, and there they were destined to remain until God should send help by raising up Immanuel—the long-promised righteous branch to the house of David. No, Joseph's God-given son was worth more to him than many ordinary sons and daughters. These, with Joseph, could but follow their ancestors to the grave, where, apart from Christ, they must remain.

Another reason urged against the miraculous conception of the Lord Jesus is that it is a doctrine which is held by the Church of Rome—a Church so far astray from Bible truth that it would be unsafe to hold with her any belief in common. The reply is that, grossly as the Church of Rome perverts truth, it would be impossible to make a rough and ready rejection of all that she holds without finding ourselves very much at war with facts. It is a fact—well attested, as we have shown, by the Scriptures—that Jesus was brought into being by the power of the Holy Spirit. Rome has corrupted the fact by inventions relating to the incarnation, immaculate conception, and so forth. But this corruption, though hiding from view the real Christ, is no reason for rejecting the simple and plain truth of his divine paternity. Whilst discarding the evil, let us not reject the good also.

*Sis. C.H. Jannaway—1908*

## **Meditations – Deity's Ways No. 16**

TO engross ourselves in business under the plea of making money to assist the truth, is dangerous. To do so at the expense of actual duty is sinful. God could easily divert the wealth of the whole world into the channels of the truth if He so willed. But He does not, though He will at the right time. For the present, He has a different work, that of preparing men for His glorious Kingdom. In this work we can become co-workers with Him. We are to regard ourselves as strangers and pilgrims, to esteem riches as a snare (1 Tim. 6:9), and prosperity as dangerous (Prov. 30:8, 9). Our aim should be to serve God without distraction: an aim not compatible with unnecessarily

involving ourselves in the cares and anxieties of commercial life. No amount of money made and applied to the service of the truth will excuse from certain clearly revealed duties, to wit, daily reading, attendance at the meetings, exhorting one another, proclaiming the word, visiting the sick, etc., etc.

Interest in the well-being of others is a marked feature in the character of true saints. It is reasonable that it should be so. They are “one body,” with “one hope,” and striving for one thing—the growth of the truth. How admirably does this regard for others—this God-like attribute—show itself in the words and actions of the apostles. Let us take two instances: Paul to the Philippians—“God is my record, how greatly I long after you all;” John to Gaius—“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” Let us measure ourselves by these exemplary men. Do our sympathies and considerations extend throughout the length and breadth of the brotherhood? They should. We are exhorted “to rejoice with those that rejoice, and to weep with those that weep.” Such a fellow-feeling as this is no mere outcome of the natural man; it is a love that has to be enkindled by continuous striving and effort. It has to be kept alive by constantly thinking about and interesting ourselves in the affairs of the brethren everywhere. The more perfect we are in this matter the more ready shall we be with the services of our money, our tongue, or our pen, as occasion may require. The more frequent and earnest, too, will our prayers be for the brethren generally—that their needs may be supplied, that they may be upheld in their steadfastness, and emboldened to teach and proclaim the truth.

“Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (John 10:48). How emphatic—how beautiful—are these words! They are an important item in the comfort which the Scriptures give. Who, at times, has not felt uneasiness and misgiving lest the power of diabolos should separate us from Christ? We need not fear: we are quite safe. If we are Christ’s sheep (and we are his sheep if we are following him) we shall not fail in attaining eternal life. The tempter is mighty, influential, and very cunning, but as impotent as a babe to cope with Christ. Why? Because—“My Father, which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.” The words of Christ should inspire us with courage. Timidity is a curse. Let us foster godly fear, but let us away with the thought that Christ is unequal to the task of preserving his brethren from becoming prey to diabolos. Nothing but our unfaithfulness can sever us from Christ. Let us meditate daily upon the Word—be ceaseless in prayer—avoid temptation—embrace all opportunity to obey the voice that speaks from heaven, and “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor

powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

“Only believe” is one of the demoralising doctrines of the apostasy. True, we are “saved through faith” (Ephes. 2:8), but not without works. Faith unaccompanied by works will save no one. We have first to believe in God, as He speaks through Christ, the prophets and apostles, and then follow up the belief by an observance of certain clearly revealed commands. Upon this basis and this basis alone, is the righteousness of Christ imputed and maintained (Rom. 4:24; John 15:10). Works meet for repentance must characterise every stage in a believer’s career. We are not asked to render an equivalent (in form of personal holiness) for the blessing offered, but we are asked, nay, imperatively called upon, to give evidence of our faith by works (James 2:14, 20). Faith logically involves works. What man can claim to believe in Christ and at the same time ignore his will? Imperfect indeed and valueless would be such a faith! The free and easy-going religious world may conscientiously scorn the divine requirement, and ridicule those who contend for it, but infallible are the words: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but *he that doeth the will* of my Father which is in heaven.”

If the truth should find us encompassed with riches, then let us remember that God requires us to use those riches in harmony with the principles of the truth. We and our belongings are not our own: we are Christ’s. To him we shall most certainly have to render an account. If during the course of our probation, wealth should be placed in our way, let us gratefully accept it, and see that we wisely employ it. Do not let us be misled by the apparently natural manner in which the wealth may have come. God works now in natural ways. The wealth may have been expressly sent that the affairs of the truth might be benefitted. If we rightly apply it, God may entrust us with more. “If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.” It is no sin to possess money. But it is a sin to make a wrong use of it, or to make the truth subservient to its acquisition. It is also wrong to use it for the purpose of ministering to the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Let us beware of seeking riches, in the sense of employing all our best energies to secure them. Let us be mindful of our Master’s words—“It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven” (R.V.). A heart well stored with the wisdom from above, and intent on shaping its course thereby, is infinitely more valuable than a big purse.

What ground has man for pride? None whatever. A proud man is an abhorrence both to God and reasonable men. Pride, so far as most men are

concerned, is curable. The unfeeling criticism of the world improves many who are afflicted with the disease. But the only effectual remedy is the Word of God, pondered reverentially and unceasingly. Some men boast of their goodness—they measure themselves by the sins of others, and then exult at their own imagined excellence! What self-deception! “Reasonable service,” “unprofitable servants,” are the Scripture terms which define the duty and standing of the most righteous. Man, at his best estate is but a poor, decaying sinner, living on sufferance. There are some foolish enough, nay, wicked enough, to glory in their riches, abilities, personal appearances, education, etc., forgetful of the Giver and Source of these things, and the responsibilities which they entail. Well might Solomon desire, concerning men, “that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.” Wisdom and knowledge call for humility and not pride. “Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.”

Mammon is universally worshipped. Let us beware lest we fall down before him. It is possible for the poor as well as the rich to become his votaries. Niggardliness may accompany a purse of silver as well as a purse of gold. When a worthy object requires it, let us not give pence when we are able to give silver. God’s eyes are upon us, and He will ultimately recompense us according to our doings. Let us seek the friendship of the rich in faith rather than the rich in pocket. Let us “condescend to men of low estate.” Let not our riches cause us to walk on stilts among our brethren. To regard the rich more than the poor is very displeasing to Christ. The Word strongly condemns such an attitude (Jas. 2:1; Job 34:19). Here again it is possible for the poorly-off to be equally guilty with the opulent. Let us avoid “having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage.” Crouching at the feet of the well-to-do is as contemptible as the lofty look of the money-inflated man. “God is no respecter of persons . . . in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” If we would please God we must imitate Him. The friends of mammon will avail us nothing in the day of judgment. Let us remember that Christ was poor, that he was sent to preach to the poor, and that it is with the poor that God’s choice mainly lies.

Commercial life ought to be a pleasure, but it is not and never will be until those who take the lead in it have the fear of God before their eyes. Current business principles are not the principles of the truth. A very slight acquaintance with trade and traders discloses this. Cutting, besting, puffing, deceiving, exacting, are the almost universal practices of business men. Close contact with trade, as it now is, makes the way difficult. Though the

commercial world is corrupt, we have to resist the corruption. God demands imperatively that we shall be honest (2 Cor. 8:21), truthful (Ephes. 4:25), straightforward (Isa. 31:15, 16), and considerate (Luke 6:31). Lying, cheating, flattering, exaggerating, and extorting He will not tolerate. To keep ourselves pure is, indeed, a difficult and embarrassing matter. But our help is divine. Omnipotence is at the side of the faithful—"the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them." Men of little faith are slow to believe this, and others entirely destitute of faith call it moonshine, but it is a blessed fact for such as have ears to hear. Let us keep God's commandments. God's requirements doubtless prove a drawback to present comfort and success, but what of that? Is it for a few fleeting years that we live? Are we afraid to venture on obedience because of present consequences? Let us away with the thought and hear Christ. "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things (including food, raiment, and shelter) shall be added unto you.*"

Bro. A. T. Jannaway—1888

## THE FAULTS OF OTHERS

IN speaking of a person's faults  
Pray don't forget your own;  
Remember those with homes of glass  
Should never throw a stone.

If we have nothing else to do  
Than to talk of those that sin,  
'Tis better to commence at home,  
And work right from within.

We have no right to judge a man  
Until he's fairly tried;  
Should we not like his company,  
We know the world is wide.

Some may have faults—and who has not,  
The old as well as young?  
Perhaps we may for all we know,  
Have fifty to their one.

I'll tell you of a better plan,  
And find it works full well:  
To find your own defects to cure  
Ere others' faults you tell.

And though I sometimes hope to be  
No worse than some I know,  
My own shortcomings bid me let  
The faults of others go.

Now let us all, when we begin,  
To slander friend or foe,  
Think of the harm one word may do  
To those we little know.

Remember, curses, chicken-like,  
Sometimes to roost come home.  
Don't speak of others' faults until  
You have none of your own.

## **Analecta Apocalypticae (57)**

### **The supper of the great God**

The work to be done at the appearing of Christ being a work of God, we should expect it to be done in an orderly and consecutive manner. What more orderly and appropriate than the following programme, which appears from the symbols and testimonies bearing upon the case: —

1. — The arrival of Christ in the earth as a thief during the progress of the sixth vial, viz., in this current epoch, when the political Euphrates is at the dried-up point, and the nations of the earth in an armed state, as the result of the policy of the political frogs (Rev. 16:15).

2. — The gathering together of the household of faith — living and dead, faithful and unfaithful, into his presence, to be judged by him — as the “account” may warrant — to be accepted or rejected — immortalized or sentenced to inherit corruption according as it shall be shown the things done during probationary life have been good or bad (2 Thess. 2:1; 2 Tim. 4:1; Luke 19:15; Acts 10:42; 2 Cor. 5:10; Luke 12:8-9; Gal. 6:8).

3. — The sending away of the rejected to await the judgment that will “devour the adversary” (Heb. 10:27), that is the manifestation of Divine power that will overthrow the nations who will oppose Christ, organized as “the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41), and Apocalyptically described as “the great dragon, that. old serpent, the Devil and Satan” (Rev. 20:1).

4. — A season of rejoicing together (in the seclusion of the judgment scene — probably Sinai — in the presence of the attendant hosts of angels), on the part of Jesus and his accepted brethren — the long separate but now united bride and Bridegroom, yielding mutual joy and gladness — the Bridegroom beholding in the bride the fruit of “the travail of his soul” during the terrible days of his sufferings; and the bride, realizing in the spectacle of her visible Lord and Saviour that “joy unspeakable and full of glory,” which, in measure, she experienced in the days of faith, when she had to say, “whom having not seen, we love” (John 16:22; Matt. 25:21; Isa. 53:11; 1 Peter 1:8).

5. — Their ascent together from the desert to the mountains of Israel to waylay and overwhelm the northern Gog, who will have victoriously overspread the re-settled Holy Land, and have brought the partially-restored Jews into great affliction, he resting in confident possession of Jerusalem (Zech. 14:5; Joel 3:11; Ezek. 38:1-12, 21; Daniel 11:45).

6. — The destruction of the northern hosts, and the expulsion of a miserable remnant out of the land (Ezek. 39:1-5; Isa. 17:14).

7. — The setting-up again of David's fallen tabernacle (Amos 9:11).

8. — A call to the nations to surrender to Jehovah's king, enthroned on Zion (Psa. 2:6, 10-11; Isa. 52:13-15; Rev. 14:7).

9. — The destruction of Rome (Rev. 14:8; 18:21).

10. — Great rejoicings in Jerusalem (Rev. 18:1-6).

11. — Preparation in the Holy Land for carrying war into the enemy's country, and inflicting the vengeance of God throughout the world (Isa. 41:15; Micah 4:13; Jer. 51:20; Rev. 19:11-16).

This is the point to which the white horse scene in Revelation 19 conducts us — the point at which the kingdom of God has begun upon the earth, but has not yet subdued the earth to its power. At this point, it exists only in the territory of the Holy Land which has been previously cleared of the enemy by the overthrow of Gog. Established here, after a preliminary pause of consolidation, it takes attitude for its great aggression upon the whole world, which it is destined to subjugate to the sceptre of the house of David. This is the relation of things symbolized in the scene before us. In such a situation, the summons of the fowls to a feast of carrion is appropriate: “I saw an angel standing in the sun: and he cried with a loud voice, saying, Come and gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.” Here we have exhibited a coming sacrifice of the great men of the earth. What greater men are there than “kings and captains and mighty men?” They comprise the respectability of the Continent where militarism is in the ascendant. The abolition of this class of respectability is a necessity before a true civilization can be established. The Socialists see this: the Nihilists of Russia have startled Europe with a programme aiming at it, and with one or two attempts to carry it out, but what can they do? If every attempted

assassination were a success, it would be but a leaf or two more from the mighty oak, and even if they could pull the oak down, what could they put in its place? We should only have the same monstrous evil in another shape. Better the ascendancy of an elegant and refined aristocracy than the leadership of an ignorant and vulgar democracy. God has His own remedy in store. He intends the destruction of the great of the earth in preparation for the new order of society to be established under Christ's glorious headship — not a democracy, but a theocracy — a true theocracy — not in name merely — the real and active government of God through Christ and an immortal administration, numerous enough to meet the requirements of universal empire. This purpose involves the perdition of the present order of things, for it is based upon principles with which the present order is at utter variance. It is expressed in the angelic formula, "Glory to God in the highest: on earth peace, and goodwill toward men." This was the motto of Christ's mission, heralded on the plains of Bethlehem, and it will not be falsified when that mission is accomplished. That mission will not be accomplished till he has performed the work symbolized in the chapter we are considering. The work he has done so far is great, but it is only foundation work. He has laid the basis of the world's reconciliation to God; but there are many obstacles, and these have to be cleared out of the way. This will be done when the kings and captains and mighty men are served up at "the supper of the great God." The way it is done is beautiful. They are not hunted and shot, like game. They are allowed to give full vent to their native diabolism, in a fully organized military enterprise to put down the power of Christ just established in Palestine.

"I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army." This is the preparation for the supper announced in verse 17. The confederated hosts of Europe, marching under the constituted authorities, draw near in threatening masses, to crush the insolent and mysterious dictatorship that has newly sprung up in Syria. They probably expect an easy victory, supposing they have only some fanatic of a second Mahomet to deal with. They put forth great strength to make sure work. They come on like Goliath, disdainful of their petty foe, yet angry at having to condescend to smite him. But how speeds the war when the hosts meet? Many a carnage-strewn field from which the kings flee will slowly tell the tale. The war lasts a long time as we saw in connection with chapter 17, and for purposes which we then considered. The end is certain. "The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat on the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. Such is the symbolic description of the general upshot of the war of the great day of God Almighty. Its general effect is clear enough, whatever may be involved in the details. The system of civil and ecclesiastical European society, as headed-up in the emperor and Pope (for the time then being), will be "taken," and extinguished in the fiery destruction that will have beforehand obliterated sacerdotal Rome in volcanic perdition. That they are "cast alive," as distinguished from the "remnant" who are "slain with the sword" of the white-horse rider in chief, intimates the difference

made between the leaders and the rank and file. The latter are destroyed with an indiscriminate slaughter; but the official heads are preserved for ceremonial judgment at the hands of the victor, after the type of the kings of the Amorites, who were brought before Joshua when their forces had been overthrown and scattered (Joshua 10:22-25). By this discrimination, the beast-and-false-prophet system, of which they will be the last representatives, will be more strongly and effectually suppressed than if they were slain in battle. The lake of fire, into which they are cast, is the symbol of the second death, as we are informed in chapter 21:8. It therefore stands for the fiery judgments of God, inflicted destructively on the adversary at Christ's coming; for it is this judgment that is to devour false brethren in a second death, after they have risen from the dead (Heb. 10:27; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 25:41). While the fiery lake is a symbol, it does not exclude the employment of literal fire as the destruction which it symbolizes, which leaves the wicked neither root nor branch (Mal. 4:1). Fire has been so employed in several former cases: vile Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24); Korah's sympathizers (Num. 16:35); Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:2); the military companies sent to arrest Elijah (2 Kings 1:10-12), etc. In whatever manner destruction befalls the adversary (and the manner will doubtless vary in different cases), it will be terrible and effectual. Participation in it — (“alive” — that is, raised from the dead to judgment) — is the fate awaiting those who, being responsible, are not counted worthy by the Lord of acceptance in that day: for “the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore-mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death” (21:8). This is not the popular hell, but it is terrible enough. It is a lake of death, and not a living torment. It symbolizes the inflicted judgment of God, which destroys those who are the subjects of it (Psa. 37:20; 145:20; Matt. 3:12), but which, for a time, leaves the traces of their shame for the instruction of the populations who will survive the judgment crisis, and find their wisdom and delight in the worship of Jehovah (Isa. 66:23-24). Proximately, the judgment will be put forth (by fire and sword) for the overthrow of the kings who oppose the setting-up of the kingdom of God; but, secondarily, it will be the great day of retribution for the wickedness of the generations that have passed. It is part of the political situation that “the time of the dead that they should be judged” arrives with the coming of Christ and the anger of the nations. Though responsibility is limited to but a small proportion of the dead (the rest remaining undisturbed: Isa. 26:13-14; Psa. 49:6-20; Prov. 21:16; Jer. 51:57), yet those who come forth to the shame and contempt of that retributive era will be a vast multitude, far vaster than the number of those accepted and glorified; for, though many be called, few are chosen (Matt. 22:14). Thus, a new and terrible aggravation of the troubles of the times will be the launching upon society of a crowd of fugitives, accursed of God, lacking friend and bread, and the opportunity of quiet settlement anywhere; knowing the nature of the time that will have come upon the world, and having only the language of despair on their lips; for they will have seen the Judge, and retired from his presence, “with weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth” — death lying before them, but not till the time appointed, at or before the close of the struggle between the nations and Christ. Well may such a time be described as “a time of trouble, such as never was,” when “many of them that sleep in

the dust of the earth shall awake” (Dan. 12:1-2). Blessed are those who find mercy of the Lord in that day, and are invited to his side, among the called, and the chosen, and the faithful, who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

Berean 2011-71

Arranged from the writings of Bro. Robert Roberts by Bro. Bob Widding

## Hints For Bible Markers

The question has been asked, “What does this paragraph have to do with Hints for Bible Markers?” The best explanation comes in how this page came about. Awhile back bro. Fred and I were discussing how to best fill the back page. We came to the conclusion that there should be some verses suggested for Bible marking, that they might bring to mind various aspects of the readings that might not initially come into our thoughts. As we go through this probationary life it would be of benefit to keep Christ’s commands at the forefront of our thoughts, so we began with them. Experience has shown it takes an average of 2 hours to mark the commands by highlighting the verse, giving the section (Our Character), and the command (Be patient towards all especially the weak and erring) each month. After submitting the first page of commands Bro. Fred wisely suggested that some comments should be made about the verses and this paragraph was born. It is for mental stimulation in a Godly direction, intimations about various verses, hints for the mind so to speak, will be brought out. Jesus tells us, “*Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*” (John 15:14) It is to this end that we began Bible marking with his commands.

We are to love each other. This requires patience with those who are weak and erring. Love is one of the most important and crucial principles we are to learn. It is one of the most difficult to do when it is to be done to the weak in the faith. Love is the one attitude that will continue eternally (1 Corinthians 13:8). “*Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*” (Romans 13:10) Therefore an obedient servant will be thoughtful of the personal comfort of his brethren, more than willing to humble himself in his love for the brotherhood. A brother with this spirit of love could not spoil his days with hard feelings. A true brother suffers wrong without being vindictive. He willingly puts away all bitterness, wrath, and anger as commanded.

Bro. Beryl Snyder

## The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by Bro. Roberts

### V. CONCERNING YOUR OWN CHARACTER

#### **Be patient towards all especially the weak and erring.**

*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; (Romans 12:10)*

*Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. (Rom. 14:1)*

*We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. (Romans 15:1)*

*Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. (1Thessalonians 5:14)*

*...put away anger, wrath, bitterness, and all evil speaking. (Colossians 3:8)*

*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: (Ephesians 4:31)*

*Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, (1 Peter 2:1)*

**Berean 2011-72**